

We also have to reform and reauthorize FISA, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. It is one thing that has kept us safe. The FISA provisions were expanded in the PATRIOT Act and they expire June 1. Senators LEAHY and LEE, a bipartisan team of Senators, have introduced a bill that would reform these important provisions so they strike the right balance between protecting our Nation's security and preserving America's civil liberties. An identical bill was reported out of the House Judiciary Committee with a strong bipartisan vote of 25 to 2. The House is out this week, but I hope they take it up next week. I am told they are going to. This is an issue that warrants our full debate and deserves the Senate's attention before we leave. We have a lot to do and not much time. I hope Senate Republicans will help us move these important pieces of legislation without allowing either one to lapse. That is going out of business.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I move to proceed to the conference report to accompany S. Con. Res. 11, the budget resolution, and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays have been ordered. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 170 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Coats	Inhofe	Sasse
Cochran	Isakson	Scott
Collins	Johnson	Sessions
Corker	Kaine	Shelby
Cornyn	King	Sullivan
Cotton	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Toomey
Enzi	McCain	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reid
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schatz
Brown	Leahy	Schumer
Cantwell	Manchin	Shaheen
Cardin	Markey	Stabenow
Carper	McCaskey	Tester
Casey	Menendez	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Donnelly	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Nelson	Wyden
Franken	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Cruz	Mikulski	Vitter
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The motion was agreed to.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed having been agreed to, the Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany S. Con. Res. 11, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 11), setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025, having met, have agreed that the Senate recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the House and agree to the same with an amendment, and the House agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of April 29, 2015.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to section 305(c) of the Congressional Budget Act, there will now be up to 10 hours of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, today we have the historic opportunity to put our country on not just another course

but a better course. This is because Congress is poised to approve its first balanced 10-year budget since 2001. This balanced budget represents a "lean in" moment for a Congress under new management to confront rapidly growing deficits borne from our government's habitual overspending which plagues America and its taxpayers.

Understanding this historical context is critical because our Nation currently faces one of the largest forecasted deficits since the end of World War II. The joint Senate-House budget agreement, which produces billion-dollar surpluses in its final years, would be an accomplishment unequaled since 1947.

The new leadership in the Senate is committed to getting back to work, which will allow us to begin rebuilding the trust of working Americans. Instead of allowing political points and partisan gridlock to take precedence over responsible governing, we are once again doing the people's business.

Make no mistake—America faces overwhelming odds as we work to steer our ship of state to more sustainable and fiscally responsible waters. Even as we take in record revenues and taxes, our Nation is still unable to live within its means. As some of America's greatest leaders have previously noted, these challenges are not undertaken because they are easy but because they are hard.

Americans who work every day to pay their taxes and provide for their families understand that it is time for the Federal Government to live within its means, just as they do. Just imagine if these families spent and borrowed the way the Federal Government does. It would mean that a family with a median income of \$52,000 would spend \$61,000 a year. The family would add an additional \$9,000 to the \$311,000 they already would owe on their credit card. American families know they cannot live on borrowed money, and neither can the Federal Government. This balanced budget shows these families that if they can do it, so can we.

As with any budget, it is important to let the numbers speak on how this proposal helps make America stronger and more secure. This joint Senate-House congressional budget balances the budget within 10 years without raising taxes. It achieves more than \$5 trillion in savings. It produces a \$32 billion surplus in 2024 and a \$24 billion surplus in 2025 and stays in balance. It boosts the Nation's economy by more than \$400 billion in additional economic growth over the next 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. It is expected to grow 1.2 million additional jobs over the next 10 years, again based on the Congressional Budget Office data.

This balanced budget achieves real results and allows the Federal Government to support Americans when it must and get out of the way when it should.

Let me tell you about some of the highlights of this budget agreement.

The balanced budget ensures a strong national defense. It invests in our military personnel and the readiness of our Armed Forces in the current global threat environment. It ensures that defense spending reflects the commitment of Congress to keep America safe and ensure that our military personnel are prepared to tackle all challenges, both at home and abroad.

The balanced budget provides for repeal and replacement of ObamaCare. It provides for the repeal of ObamaCare, including all of its taxes, regulations, and mandates. It paves the way for real health care reforms to strengthen the doctor-patient relationship, expand choices, lower health care costs, and improve access to quality, affordable, innovative health care. In other words, it delivers on what the President promised but never delivered. It focuses reconciliation instructions on the key congressional committees with jurisdiction over ObamaCare: the Senate Finance Committee; the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee; the House Energy and Commerce Committee; the House Education and the Workforce Committee; and the House Ways and Means Committee.

The balanced budget preserves Medicare. It preserves Medicare and protects seniors' access to health care by extending the life of the Medicare hospital insurance trust fund. It repeals the Independent Payment Advisory Board—IPAB—the unelected, unaccountable board of 15 bureaucrats created by the President's health care law that will make decisions on benefit cuts. It accounts for the recent enactment of legislation that addressed the Medicare Program's sustainable growth rate—SGR—or more commonly called the doc fix.

The balanced budget supports stronger economic growth. It boosts U.S. economic growth and private sector job creation by balancing the budget, reducing the debt, and putting a halt to government overspending to reduce the cost of work and investment, as well as the cost of starting and growing a business.

It expands the Nation's economy by more than \$400 billion over the next 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office, under the old way of doing the accounting.

It provides an estimated 1.2 million jobs for the U.S. economy by 2025, based on data provided by the Congressional Budget Office in its traditional ways of evaluating.

It boosts the Nation's gross national product by 1.4 percent per person after accounting for inflation by 2025, according to the Congressional Budget Office. This boost in economic growth will all come from the private sector. Government spending does not contribute to its growth. As my fellow Budget Committee member and businessman Senator PERDUE notes, expanding government does not help grow the economy.

The balanced budget improves accountability and effectiveness of government. It is important to note that a balanced budget will help make our government more efficient, effective, and accountable. If government programs are not delivering results, they should be improved, and if they are not needed, they ought to be eliminated.

This agreement between the Senate and House will help Congress prioritize and demand results from our government programs. There is no doubt that this will be challenging for every single Member of Congress, but I believe we are up to the task because the American people are counting on us.

This budget agreement improves transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the Federal Government by cutting waste, eliminating redundancies, and enacting regulatory reform, and there is plenty of that out there we have not looked at yet.

It calls for modernizing Medicaid by increasing State flexibility and protecting those most in need of assistance.

It improves honest and responsible accounting practices as part of the Federal budget process by ensuring that fair-value accounting estimates are used, which provide a more honest accounting method. This is in addition to the honest, dynamic scoring method that more accurately tells us what legislation will cost hard-working taxpayers.

It improves the administration and coordination of benefits, and it increases employment opportunities for disabled workers.

This budget also calls on Congress to pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. That point is especially important because we must show taxpayers that Congress is committed to a balanced budget and not to overspending, so we can make our government more effective. But we are running out of time.

Currently, lawmakers in 27 States have passed applications for a convention to approve a balanced budget amendment and new applications in 9 other States are close behind. If we had 34 States, that would cause us to have a constitutional convention to balance the budget. If just seven of those nine States approve moving forward on the balanced budget issue, it will bring the total number of applications to 34 States. This would meet the two-thirds requirement under article V of the Constitution and force Congress to take action.

The other side often says they cut the Federal deficit in half during the President's term in office, but I think using the word "deficit" is meant to be confusing. People think he reduced the debt by one-half. Actually, the President has increased the Nation's debt dramatically. What we are talking about when we say "deficit" is the amount of overspending, the amount we spend compared to what we bring in. Yes, that is deficit, but it is over-

spending, and if we call it overspending, it will not be confused with bringing down the national debt, which is not even touched and which under the President's budget only gets worse.

In his most recent budget released earlier this year, the President proposed a plan that never balances and includes huge spending increases. It also includes a \$2.1 trillion tax increase—that is \$2,100 billion of tax increases—while it adds \$8.5 billion—or \$8,500 million—to the national debt. The Senate recently voted on his budget, and it was rejected 99 to 1.

There is no question that balancing the budget is a daunting task. Last year, our Nation overspent by \$468 billion, which, if left unchecked, is set to rise to \$1,000 billion. We are in control of \$1,100 billion in discretionary spending, and this year we will spend \$468 billion more than we take in. I will repeat that. We are only in control of \$1,100 billion in discretionary spending, and this year we will spend \$468 billion more than we take in.

This is an unsustainable financial path, and if Congress did what every American family has to do—live within our means—we would have to cut our annual discretionary spending in half. That would be a 50-percent cut.

This is because we spend 1½ times what we take in for items on which we can make decisions. No family or State government can do that for very long, but the Federal Government does it every year.

Our budget is not perfect, but it is a start. It provides Congress and the Nation with a fiscal blueprint that challenges lawmakers to examine every dollar we spend.

This is crucial because we currently spend over \$230 billion in interest on our debt every year, and that is at an interest rate of 1.7 percent. The Congressional Budget Office tells us that every 1 percentage point that our interest rates rise will increase America's overspending by \$1,745 billion over the next 10 years.

We have a looming debt of \$18 trillion on its way to \$27 trillion. If our interest rates were to rise to 5 percent, which is the historical norm, we will have to spend almost \$700 billion annually, out of the \$1,100 billion we get to make decisions on, to pay the interest on our debt. This would be catastrophic for our Nation's economy. It is vital that we address this situation now while we still have some choices.

To provide a clearer picture of how dire our Nation's fiscal outlook is, if we were forced to balance the budget in 1 year, we would have to eliminate most of our defense spending, most of our highway spending, and most of our education spending. This drastic 50-percent cut would be needed because of our consistent overspending and our interest payments, which are set to explode.

What are the two best ways to make a difference?

First, Congress should look at the more than 260 programs whose authorization—the right to spend money—has expired. Some of these government programs expired in 1983, but we are still spending money on them every year. That means we have been paying for these expired programs for more than 30 years. In some cases, we spend as much as four times the spending authority that has expired. We have to look at those programs.

For the 260 programs that have expired, we are spending \$293 billion a year. Normally, we talk about over a 10-year period. Over a 10-year period, that would be \$2,935 billion. Eliminating those programs would almost balance the budget. They can't be eliminated, but they should be looked at regularly. That is why we have authorizations that expire. That is so we are forced to take a look at them. No, that is so we should be forced to take a look at them; obviously, we don't. We don't do that because we want the committees of jurisdiction to have a hard look at the expired authorizations and make them current or, if there are duplications, eliminate the programs that are not needed after all or, with duplication, we ought to be able to at least get rid of half of the administrative bureaucracy on it and make sure the money gets out into the country where we promised it.

Now, there is a second way. The other way we can balance the budget is to grow the economy. The Congressional Budget Office tells us that if we were to increase the gross domestic product, private sector growth—again, this is not referring to government GDP; that is just private sector growth—if we were to increase the private sector growth by 1 percent, that would provide an additional \$300 billion in additional tax revenue every year. I think that could balance the budget. But first we must get our overspending under control because Congress is already spending more tax revenue than at any point in history. When we take the tax revenue from the individuals and from the businesses, we slow down this growth that would provide the additional \$300 billion in tax revenue every year. If we grow the economy, we will expand opportunity for each and every American.

Now, I know in their speeches our friends from across the aisle will criticize us for not being finished by April 15. But think of it this way: We did something in 4 months that they could only accomplish once in 4 years, and that is produce a budget—let alone a budget that actually balances.

While they were in charge, they often didn't produce a budget by April 15 or October 1 or even January 1. In fact, they produced only one budget conference agreement in the last 6 years, so don't criticize us for what we are doing. While we may have taken a few extra days, we did get it done, and this budget is poised to play a vital role in helping Congress get back to the work

of doing the people's business. And when we get it done on time, the spending committees can begin on time. Hopefully, that will give the spending committees time to look at this duplication and the unauthorized spending we have.

Now, some point out that the President was able to get his budget out on time. That is true, but the last time I checked, he didn't have to run it by 535 elected officials as we do; he just had to run it past one elected official—himself. I should mention that is the first time in 6 years he has gotten a budget to us on time. We even had to have a rollcall vote today to proceed to this privileged conference report. I don't understand that.

The Senate Budget Committee is tasked with the responsibility of setting spending goals. Congress has other committees that authorize government programs and they are charged with overseeing their efficiency and effectiveness. We also have committees that allocate the exact dollars for these programs every year, but the Senate Budget Committee sets the spending goals. In other words, we set limits and we set some enforcement.

This is why passing a budget is so important for our Nation. It lets the congressional policymakers who actually allocate the dollars get to work by following our spending limits. This year, we are giving them an early start. Leader MCCONNELL is committed to allowing the Senate to do its job, and that means debate and votes on the 12 appropriations bills—the 12 spending bills. This is an important occurrence in the Senate, because over the past 8 years, appropriations bills have been as rare as ice cubes in the desert.

I wish to thank my colleagues in both the Senate and the House for all their hard work in producing a joint budget agreement that balances within 10 years, does not raise taxes, strengthens our Nation's defense, protects our most vulnerable citizens, improves economic growth and opportunity for hard-working families, and stops the Federal Government's out-of-control spending. These important steps, and still others to come, show Congress is back working for the American people to deliver on the promise of a government that is more accountable. This is something each and every American expects and deserves from its leaders in Washington. With action on our balanced budget, we will deliver.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me thank Senator ENZI for his civility and his humor. I have enjoyed the process by which we have gotten to where we are today. But I must say that anyone who takes an objective look at this Republican budget can do nothing else but conclude that this is an absolute disaster for the working families of this country. In fact, one of the problems I have had in describing the Re-

publican budget is that it is so bad—it is so far out of touch with where the American people are—that people really don't even believe us when we talk about what is in this budget, which is what I am going to do in a moment.

Before I do that, I think we can all agree that what a budget is about is a development of priorities to address problems. We look at what is going on in our country as we assess the needs of the American people, and we build a budget around those needs. So let me begin by assessing what I believe are the needs of the American people.

The fundamental economic reality of today is that for the last 40 years—not the last 6 years, not the last 20 years but the last 40 years—the middle class of this country has been disappearing. Today, we have more people living in poverty than at almost any time in the modern history of America, and yet while that is going on, the gap between the very, very, very rich and everybody else is growing wider and wider.

Today, in fact, in America, we have more income and wealth inequality than any other major country on Earth. I know many people think that in the United Kingdom, they have the Queen and dukes and lords and all of this aristocracy; clearly, their distribution of wealth and income must be a lot worse than it is in the United States. That is not the case. Today, compared to every other major country on Earth, our distribution of wealth and income is the worst, and it is worse in this country today than at any time since the late 1920s.

It is hard to believe but true: Today, 99 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent. Since the Wall Street crash of 2008, 99 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent. What that means is all over this country we have people working not one job but two jobs, three jobs; people working longer hours for lower wages. Yet 99 percent of all of the new income generated is going to the top 1 percent. In the midst of that reality, our Republican colleagues say, Well, only 99 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent, but what can we do to make the richest people even richer?

Median family income in this country since 1999 has gone down by almost \$5,000. Families are struggling to put bread on the table, to send their kids to college, to take care of their basic needs. But the Republican budget says the middle class is shrinking, people are struggling; what can we do to make life even harder for the working families of our country.

When we talk about unemployment in America, the official unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. The true unemployment—real unemployment—however, is 10.9 percent, if we include those people who have given up looking for work and people who are working part time when they want to work full time. Youth unemployment, which we never talk about, is over 17 percent, and African-American youth unemployment is

literally off of the charts. Does the Republican budget say: How do we put the American people back to work or how do we help our young people who are desperately looking for jobs or looking for education? Quite the contrary. The Republican budget cuts virtually every program out there that is designed to help working families and unemployed workers.

The typical male worker—that male worker in the middle of the American economy—incredibly made \$783 less last year than he did 42 years ago. In other words, the middle class in this country is moving, unfortunately, in the wrong direction.

Does the Republican budget say that we are going to raise the minimum wage so that everybody in this country who works 40 hours a week can live with dignity? No, it does not. Again, it moves us in exactly the wrong direction.

While unemployment is much too high, while median family income has gone down, when millions of people are working longer hours for lower wages, there is another phenomenon taking place in this country, and that is that the wealthiest people and the largest corporations are doing phenomenally well—not good, not pretty good—phenomenally well. Today, we live in a society where the top 1 percent owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent.

Here is the chart. The top 1 percent owns almost as much wealth—here at the top is the 1 percent. Here is the bottom 90 percent, going down. That is reality.

The Republican budget says: Wow, look at that extraordinary disparity in wealth. We are going to do something about it.

Yes, they do something about it. Their proposals will make the rich even richer and working people even poorer. Not only do we have a situation today where—as incredible as it may sound—the wealthiest 14 people in this country—the wealthiest 14—not 1,400, not 14,000, but the wealthiest 14 people in this country—in the last 2 years have seen their wealth increase by \$157 billion. So 14 people have seen their wealth increase by \$157 billion. That is more wealth than the total wealth of the bottom 130 million Americans.

Here is a chart showing Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, an increase of \$19 billion. Larry Ellison's wealth increased by \$11 billion. This is just an increase over a 2-year period. Do you know what the Republican budget says to these guys? Hey, \$157 billion in increase in 2 years? That is not enough. We are going to give your families a very significant tax break by ending the estate tax.

We have a situation where one family in this country—the Walton families, which own Walmart—that one family owns more wealth than the bottom 42 percent of the American people.

Given the huge disparity of wealth and income, given the fact that mil-

lions of Americans today are struggling to put food on the table, given the fact that working families don't know how they can afford quality child care for their kids and middle class families don't know how they are able to send their kids to college, the Republican budget in virtually every instance moves us in exactly the wrong direction.

The United States of America, sadly, is the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all people as a right—something that I believe should occur. I think health care is a right and not a privilege. Today, we have made some gains under the Affordable Care Act. We have more people who have health insurance than was the case a number of years ago. That is a good thing. This is what the Republican budget does: The Republican budget, by ending the Affordable Care Act and by cutting Medicaid by over \$400 billion, throws 27 million Americans off of health insurance. That is it—27 million Americans—men, women, kids—off of health insurance. What happens to those people? How many of those 27 million people will die? Certainly thousands, because when they get sick they are not going to be able to go to a doctor. How many of those people will suffer because they had illnesses that could have been treated or cured, but they can't go to a doctor? This budget knocks 27 million people off of health insurance. When you ask the Republicans what happens to those people, they have no response at all—none, zero. So instead of moving us in the direction of having health care for all of our people, they increase the number of uninsured by 27 million Americans.

At a time when senior poverty is increasing, the Republican budget calls for ending Medicare as we know it by turning it into a voucher program. What does that mean? The Republican idea is that we give people a voucher. I don't know that they have an exact amount for their voucher—maybe \$8,000—whatever. They say: Here is a check for \$8,000. You are 85 years of age and you are struggling with cancer. Here is your check for \$8,000, and you go out to a private insurance company and get the best deal you can.

If you are 85 years of age and you are struggling with cancer or heart disease and somebody gives you a check for \$8,000, you tell me what kind of private insurance you are going to be able to get. How many days will it last you in the hospital? This is an effort to undermine and destroy Medicare. It is a disastrous idea. That is exactly what is in the Republican proposal.

At a time when millions of disabled people are trying to survive on less than \$14,000 a year, the Republican budget would pave the way for a massive cut to Social Security Disability Insurance. Instead of making college more affordable—and I know that in the State of Vermont, my State, and I expect in States all over this country,

young people are really wondering whether they want to go to college, because they are so nervous about the debt they will have when they come out—what is the Republican response to the crisis of the lack of affordability of college? Here is their response. They would cut Pell grants by more than \$85 billion over the next decade, which would make the cost of college education more expensive for some 8 million Americans. In other words, instead of addressing this crisis, instead of helping make us competitive in a global economy by giving us the best-educated workforce, what they do is to move us in the wrong direction.

We are as a nation the wealthiest Nation in the history of the world. Most people don't know it, because almost all of that wealth goes to a handful of people on top. In the midst of this extremely wealthy Nation, disgracefully, today, we have millions and millions of families who literally are worried about how they are going to put food on the table and feed their kids tomorrow and next week.

I can tell you that in the State of Vermont—and I expect in States around this country—we have people working 40 and 50 hours a week but, because their wages are so low, they don't earn enough money to buy the food they need to properly take care of their kids and feed their kids well. Those families literally go to emergency food shelters all over America. These are working people who never in their lives thought they would have to go to an emergency food shelter. That is what they are doing all over America.

What is the Republican response to hunger in America, taking care of the most basic needs we have? The Republican response is massive cuts—massive cuts—to food stamps and the WIC Program. The WIC Program is a wonderful program to ensure that low-income pregnant women get good nutrition and that their babies have good nutrition. How basic can it get? Cut those programs. Cut the Meals On Wheels programs for fragile seniors.

In the midst of throwing 27 million Americans off of health insurance, in the midst of cutting \$85 billion for Pell grants to make it harder for our kids to go to college, in the midst of making massive cuts in nutrition programs which would increase hunger and suffering in the United States of America, Republicans do something else that is literally remarkable—and I know people think I am not telling the truth. I am.

What they say is that when the rich are getting richer, when almost all new income and wealth is going to the people on top, what they have decided to do for the wealthiest 6,000 families in America—the top two-tenths of 1 percent—what they say to these billionaire families is that we are going to give you a massive tax break by repealing the estate tax. What we are going to do is give you a \$269 billion tax

break that goes to the top two-tenths of 1 percent, and 99.8 percent of the American people will not gain one nickel in benefits from the repeal of the estate tax. It only goes to the wealthiest of the wealthy.

But to add insult to injury, while giving a huge tax break for the billionaire class, the Republican budget also says: Let's see if we can raise taxes on lower-income and working-class families by allowing the expanded earned-income tax credit and child tax credit to expire. These are tax credits that go to working families and lower-income families who have kids. We added a more generous benefit a few years ago, and they are going to allow that to expire at the same time as they give a massive tax break to the wealthiest families in this country.

My friend from Wyoming, Mr. ENZI, talks repeatedly about the deficit. I agree that the deficit is a problem. But he will acknowledge that under the last 6 years under President Obama, we have made significant progress in reducing the deficit—about two-thirds. But it remains very high. We have an \$18 trillion debt and that is a real issue. There is no denying it. One of the reasons that we have a huge debt—not the only reason but one of the reasons—is that the United States under President Bush went to war in Iraq and went to war in Afghanistan.

Now nobody knows what the end cost of that war will be by the time we take care of the last veteran 50 or 60 years from now, but the best guesses are that those wars will cost us \$4 to \$6 trillion by the time we take care of the needs of our last veteran who served in those wars.

How do we pay for those wars? How do we pay for those wars? In every other war that this country fought, Presidents had the courage to go forward and say: Wars are expensive. We are going to raise taxes. Not in this case—those wars were put on the credit card—\$4 to \$6 trillion and we didn't pay for it.

Apparently, my Republican colleagues haven't learned a simple lesson—that you can't be honest and worry about the deficit, and then go to war and not pay for it. What they have done in this budget is to increase Pentagon spending by another \$38 billion next year and \$186 billion over the next 10 years.

And how is that paid for? Oh, it is not paid for. It goes on the credit card. They put it all into the so-called OCO account, and this is, by the way, an account that many of my conservative friends have called an accounting gimmick.

So here we are. Here we are at a time when this country probably faces more serious problems than at any time since the Great Depression. The middle class is disappearing. Poverty is much too high. The gap between the very, very, very rich and everybody else is growing wider and wider. Real unemployment is much too high. Young peo-

ple are unable to afford to go to college. On every one of those issues, the Republican budget does exactly the opposite of what we should be doing.

In the year 2015, we should not be voting or bringing forth a budget which makes the billionaires even richer while cutting programs for people who are struggling. With an \$18 trillion debt, we should not be increasing military spending by simply adding that money to the deficit.

So I would hope that people in this body, in the Senate, will take a deep breath, and appreciate, in fact, what is going on with working families in this country and will vote no on this disastrous budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, thank you very much.

I want to thank Senator SANDERS for laying out the budget in a way that makes sense. It is a document that is supposed to reflect our values, who we are. It is supposed to be a roadmap for the future. What Mr. SANDERS has just said is that it is a roadmap to disaster, and I intend to pick up on that theme.

I want also to say that I know how hard it is to get a budget out. I was on the House Budget Committee for years and on the Senate Budget Committee. I want to compliment Senator ENZI. I know it is hard to put together a coalition, even within your own party. He has said that the Senate is under new management and he is very excited about it, and I understand that. I get it. I have been in both the majority and the minority and I like the majority a lot better.

But the bottom line is, if this is the first big action of the new management, let's bring back the old one, because in this budget, the people who benefit are the very tippy top maybe two-tenths of 1 percent. It is unreal. I am not going to stand on the floor and just throw out barbs, I am going to give definite numbers so everybody sees what we mean.

The only time we have had a balanced budget in recent history was when Bill Clinton was President and the Democrats controlled the Senate. I remember it well because we didn't get one Republican vote for that budget that was so critical.

I remember my colleague Senator Bob Kerrey was thinking about it so hard. He saw all sides. He went to the movies, and during the movie he came to a—this was the right budget—he came back and voted and it got done.

Now, that was a Democratic budget that invested in the people of the United States of America, invested in their infrastructure, invested in their education, invested in their health care, and invested in them. It invested in them.

Remember, President Clinton said: Put America's families first. And it worked because we invested in our people. We headed into a period of unprecedented growth—23 million jobs cre-

ated under Bill Clinton and the budget balanced.

As soon as George W. Bush took over, he did enormous tax cuts for the wealthiest at the top, got us into two wars—put them on a credit card—and we have been battling our way back after the worst economic downturn. If you look at the job creation under "W," it is just shocking. Now, under President Obama, we have fought tooth and nail and we are coming back. This budget is an unmitigated disaster.

Let's start. At a time when 16 million people have finally been able to get health insurance thanks to the Affordable Care Act, also known as ObamaCare, they want to repeal this law and throw these people out. They will not have health care, and then what will happen? They will suffer, their families will suffer, and the economy will suffer. At a time when nearly 70 million Americans rely on Medicaid and CHIP for health coverage—Medicaid, we know is for the working poor, CHIP is for children—they want to block grant that program and, while they are doing it, impose cuts of more than \$1.3 trillion.

So you have to ask this question—this isn't just a matter of putting a number on an easel—what will it mean for maternity care when half of all of our births in the United States are financed by Medicaid? Half of all births in the United States are financed by Medicaid, and they are cutting Medicaid by \$1.3 trillion. So they will fight for your right to be born, but, boy, don't count on getting any help if you wind up in a maternity ward.

At a time when more than 50 million senior citizens and disabled Americans are in the Medicare Program and baby boomers continue to age in, they propose cutting the program by \$430 billion by placing the burden on the backs of seniors and privatizing that program through vouchers. They are going to end Medicare: Senior citizens, you are under new management here, and they are ending Medicare as we know it, as we know that great program.

So after years of being the most successful program—and if you ask people on Medicare if they like it, they not only like it, they love it—they are ending it.

As Senator SANDERS pointed out, eloquently, I thought, they are saying to a sick person—you know, people are living longer. Thank God. So let's say a person is 85, 90 years old, having a hard time functioning and then gets a desperate cancer on top of it: Here is money. Go out and find the best insurance you can. Oh, yes, we know you are 90. Here is a Web site.

Oh, I don't have a computer.

Too bad. We are under new management over here. Oh, great. Bring back the old management. That is what I think.

The old management wasn't perfect, but the old management had a heart, had a soul. No one will hear.

Now, how is this: In case you are not sold about how devastating this budget

is, the Republican budget resolution eliminates opportunities for the neediest students from preschool to college by cutting \$270 billion from education and job training investments over the next decade. So while the Republican leadership is pushing for free trade, free trade, whatever, what is happening to training our workers? They are cut.

At a time when less than one-half of eligible preschool-aged children are able to participate in Head Start, half of our eligible kids cannot get in. The Republican budget cuts the program by over \$4 billion, resulting in over 400,000 children losing access to Head Start over the next decade.

Now, tell me I am dreaming. This is the new management. We are going to take 400,000 children over the next decade and say: Sorry, no room for you. The door is closed.

We all know Head Start is critical.

We know the cost of college continues to rise. We all know it—because we are alive, we have a heartbeat and a pulse, and everybody alive today knows what it is. I have met people who are still paying off their student loan debt when they are on Social Security. That is the new reality. What did they do? They cut Pell grant funding by more than one-third, making college less affordable for many of the more than 8 million students receiving aid.

So let's see who is now in their line of fire: middle class, seniors, little babies, students, and workers. At a time when student loan debt has reached \$1.2 trillion and students are graduating with over \$28,000 in student loan debt, on average, the Republican budget resolution eliminates the in-school interest subsidy for need-based student loans, causing student loan debt to increase by nearly \$4,000 for an estimated 30 million students.

So it isn't bad enough for them to know that people are paying off their student loans when they are on Social Security, now they are increasing the cost of student loans even more, instead of working with us to decrease the cost to students. I will tell you, if every taxpayer in America is a shareholder, it is time to call a meeting and change this management.

Now, if you are a renter, one in four renters is paying more than half their income on housing, placing them one paycheck away from homelessness—half your income. The Republican budget resolution eliminates housing assistance for 450,000 families due to a 14-percent cut to the section 8 rental assistance program—beautiful.

At a time when 45.3 million people are living in poverty, the Republican budget resolution cuts about \$800 billion from income security programs over 10 years. This category includes SNAP, Supplemental Security Income for low-income seniors and people with disabilities, and heating assistance for low-income families—lovely, lovely. Welcome to the new management that is the Senate.

Here is the thing, this is even hard to imagine they did it. It upset them so

much that the wealthiest 14 families might get hit with a little bit of the tax—and I am talking about people who are worth over \$10 million, way more, 20, 30, 40, 50—you name it, the highest level. They give them a \$3 million tax cut.

They actually raised taxes by an average of \$900 on 16 million low- and moderate-income families by allowing expansions to the EITC and child tax credit to expire, so there is no expansion of that program.

Now, whom else could we hit? Well, maybe we could hit some of our States that are suffering from the realities of climate change, such as the Western States that are undergoing the longest recorded drought in history.

Come talk to my farmers, ask them how happy they are that you are proposing dramatic cuts—and have imposed them in this budget—to the EPA, to the Department of Interior, DOE, and to NOAA—the agencies best equipped to steward our precious natural resources, develop a clean energy future, enforce our water laws, and protect our health.

But wait a minute. There are a few people who were left—away from this budget knife. Well, if you drive a car or you drive a truck or you get on a bus, you get hit too.

Listen to this one. At a time when 63,500 of our bridges are structurally deficient and 50 percent of our roads are in less than good condition, this budget cuts transportation and infrastructure investment by more than \$200 billion over 10 years, a cut of 40 percent.

I just had a press conference a couple of weeks ago with Republican business leaders and Democratic workers, and they have come together against this new management idea. They are looking to fund the highway trust fund.

The whole fund expires this month. I haven't heard one word about how we are going to have a multiyear funding bill. We have six States today that have stopped spending on infrastructure.

The last I checked, we are still the greatest Nation in the world. Tell me, how do you remain a great power if your bridges are structurally deficient—63,500 of them. How do you remain a world power when you cannot move goods efficiently or people efficiently?

I will say, in all my years here, I have had the best relationship on infrastructure spending with my colleague Senator INHOFE of Oklahoma. This budget predicts a 40-percent decrease in infrastructure spending, so pretty much everyone—everyone who is impacted by this new management, which is all of us—is getting hit hard by this budget. A budget is a reflection of whom you fight for, whom you believe in, and what your values are. This budget will bring pain to middle-class families, to our working poor, to our children, to our seniors, to our students, to our drought-plagued or flood-

plagued areas, and to the people who use their automobiles to go to work.

In essence, this budget hurts the very people we should be fighting for. Instead of checking with those who actually balanced the budget—when Bill Clinton was President—they go off on an opposite tear, which is to take away investments—which is what led to the prosperity, which is what led to the balanced budget, which is what led to 23 million jobs—and put in place austerity.

I gave you just a little look at some of these cuts. But, guess what, America, there is a secret in the budget. There is another \$900 billion of cuts over the next 10 years in a secret little package, unspecified cuts, almost \$1 trillion, because they don't even know where to go to cut. So if you didn't like the cuts I talked about, wait until they get to the unspecified cuts.

Who do you think is going to get those cuts? Not the wealthy few families, it is going to be more pain for the middle class, more pain for the working poor, and more pain for the workers and businesses of the transportation sector. We are not going to see cures for Alzheimer's or cancer because, believe me, that is not going to happen, no initiatives there.

This budget does not belong on the Senate floor. This budget is too painful to be enacted. This budget ought to be redone with an eye toward the balance we achieved those years ago by making smart investments in our people and by cutting back on wasteful spending but not bringing political vendettas to the table when already so many millions of our people have health insurance. You are going to take that away? You fought so hard for the chance to govern—you did, believe me—just as we are going to fight to get it back. That is what politics is. But now it is time to work together.

This is a radical budget. This doesn't reflect any coming together. And as soon as we wake up America to the fact that this budget hurts them, maybe we will have a chance to fix it. I really hope so because our middle class can't take any more pain. Our drivers can't take any more pain. Our students can't take any more pain. Our seniors can't take any more pain. Our children can't fend for themselves.

So I hope we will have a big “no” vote on this budget. I also hope, after we have our vote, that we come together and fix some of these major problems, starting with the highway trust fund, where already six of our States have stopped spending. There are still 800,000 unemployed construction workers and thousands of businesses suffering because we don't have a long-term solution to the highway trust fund. Why don't we take care of that? No, we are going to take up some fast-track, speedy trade bill that includes countries that pay their people 52 cents an hour. That is what we are going to do. We are going to rush to that.

Why don't we fix the problems here? Why don't we fix the student loan rate so people aren't paying off student loans when they are on Social Security? Why don't we make sure people can afford to get educated? Why don't we improve the health care system and not throw people off the rolls? Let's do it the right way. Let's not do it "my way or the highway" because that only is going to wind up hurting the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am glad I had a chance to come to the floor and listen to the distinguished ranking member on the Committee on the Budget and the senior Senator from California talk about this budget, but I feel like it is two ships passing in the night when I see this remarkable accomplishment under the leadership of Chairman ENZI on the Committee on the Budget and the entire Committee on the Budget.

This is a congressional budget that balances within 10 years. It doesn't raise taxes. It reprioritizes our Nation's defense. It protects our most vulnerable citizens. It improves economic growth, which is literally the rising tide that lifts all boats in a growing economy. That is something our economy has not been doing very well lately. And it stops the Federal Government's out-of-control Federal spending. This is really a remarkable accomplishment. As a matter of fact, this is the first joint 10-year balanced budget resolution since 2001.

I think what drives our friends across the aisle crazy is the fact they haven't passed a budget since 2009. Now, with the new leadership here in the Senate, in the 114th Congress, we have done the basic work of governing, which is to propose—and this afternoon we will pass—a balanced budget.

I know there are differences across the aisle. Clearly, there are reasons why people choose to be a Democratic Senator or a Republican Senator. But, to me, the differences are pretty stark. Our friends across the aisle don't think that the government should have to live within its means but that we should continue borrowing money we don't have and overspending and hand the bill to our kids and grandkids. I personally think that is a moral hazard. That is really unconscionable—to keep spending money and then to send the bill to our kids and grandkids and say: You pay. We had a good time. Good luck.

Our friends across the aisle think the Federal Government is not big enough because they want to continue to feed

the beast with more of Americans' hard-earned tax dollars so it can get bigger and intrude further into everyone's freedoms and choices that should be left to individuals and their families.

It sounds to me as though the ranking member on the Committee on the Budget, the Senator from Vermont, thinks the government ought to simply take more of the money Americans have earned and give it to somebody else who didn't earn it.

I can only conclude that our friends across the aisle think an \$18 trillion debt is not a problem. It is. When interest rates start creeping back up, as they eventually will, more and more of our tax dollars are going to be spent sending interest payments to the Chinese and other holders of our sovereign debt to service that debt. That is going to crowd out not only national security spending, it is going to crowd out the safety net spending we all agree is necessary for people who can't protect themselves.

So there are real differences.

This budget, I am proud to say—which we will pass this afternoon thanks to the heroic work of our Committee on the Budget—is a real accomplishment. I guess what would be a real embarrassment is if we didn't pass a budget. But we will pass a budget.

People listening at home may say: Why are you patting yourselves on the back for passing a budget? We have a budget in our business. We have a budget at home. So why is it such a big deal for the new Congress to actually pass a budget?

Well, I guess it shouldn't be a big deal. It should be something we do routinely because it is really the most basic demonstration of the ability to govern. But what makes it remarkable is the fact that it hasn't happened in a long time. So that is why I am so glad.

We actually have seen under the new leadership in the 114th Congress some real progress. We have actually seen Democrats and Republicans working together to accomplish some important things. That is something which I think the American people appreciate and which all Members of the Senate have come to enjoy. The mood has changed. The ability of Senators to participate in the process and actually come up with solutions has gotten so much better in just the first 100 days of the 114th Congress, I think we are slowly starting to develop some momentum.

We passed a bill that lets Medicare beneficiaries see the doctors they need. That is a good thing. We also passed an important piece of legislation that provides aid to victims of human trafficking. Through the end of this week, we will continue to work our way through another important piece of legislation, the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, which was unanimously voted out of committee a few weeks ago. This is very important not only to the region in the Middle East

but also to us and the world. This bill will guarantee that Congress will have an opportunity to review and potentially block any final deal with Iran that President Obama reaches during the so-called P5+1 negotiations.

After we conclude the consideration of that important piece of legislation, we are going to move on to consider something else I think will help grow the economy and actually end up bringing more revenue into the Federal Treasury, help us with some of our deficits and debt, and that is to pass trade promotion authority and then to take up the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement.

My State happens to export more than any other State in the Nation, and our economy reflects that because just our binational trade with Mexico creates about 6 million jobs. It is a good thing to have more markets in which to sell the things our farmers grow or sell the livestock our ranchers raise or the manufactured goods Americans make. It is a good thing.

This bill would make sure the United States gets the best deal in pending trade agreements with countries from Asia, to South America, to Europe, and it would help make sure that Texas's products and, more generally, American products and industries find new markets, which will in turn raise wages for hard-working families. That is something we all support.

With all these other signs of progress, I think that writing and passing a budget is one of the most fundamental responsibilities we have. While that should be pretty obvious—families across the country sit around the table each month and do the same thing—it is a fact that was lost on many of our Democratic colleagues when they controlled the Chamber.

While listening to the Senator from California, I was reminded once again of what a cut in Washington, DC, is. It is not a cut in the amount of spending in a program at current levels, it is a reduction in the rate of increase. That is what they call a cut. What this budget does is it begins to cut the rate of increase of spending in a way that helps us control the deficits and take the first important step toward dealing with our long-term debt.

When we vote on this budget today, it will be the first time both Chambers have actually voted for an agreed-upon spending bill since 2009. As I said earlier, it will be the first balanced 10-year budget since 2001, and that is despite 4 consecutive years of trillion-dollar deficits under President Obama—trillion-dollar deficits. Those deficits, as the chairman has appropriately pointed out, add up to debt, the deficit being the difference between what the government brings in and what it spends in a given year. Four years of consecutive trillion-dollar deficits has done grave damage to our national debt, with a downgrade in America's credit rating by Standard & Poor's.

It would be one thing if the President and our friends across the aisle had a

good record when it comes to their budgets and their proposals, but they do not. Just look at what the President has proposed.

President Obama has missed statutory deadlines to propose a budget so often that it became more notable when he actually did fulfill that responsibility than when he did not.

When the President's budget was voted on in 2011, it was unanimously rejected by Democrats and Republicans. It didn't receive a single vote. The same was true in 2012. If the President had proposed a responsible budget, I am certain Members of his own party would have at least voted for it. In 2011 and 2012, no Democrat voted for the President's budget. Last year, in the House of Representatives, all but two Members voted against the President's budget when given the chance. It went down by a resounding 413 to 2. That was the President's budget proposal. We saw history repeat itself in March as well. One by one, nearly every Member of this body came to the floor and gave a thumbs down to President Obama's budget proposal. As a matter of fact, it got one vote; it went down 98 to 1.

Whether it is offering a completely irresponsible budget that is rejected by both parties or the failure to offer any budget at all, our friends across the aisle are living in a glass house. And when you live in a glass house, you really shouldn't throw stones. But the most important point is that the American people deserve better.

We had an important election in November, and it changed the majority in the Senate. It established new management.

In that last election cycle we made promises we intend to keep, and we were elected on our promise to be different and to govern responsibly. That promise includes passing a budget that protects taxpayers and sets the Nation on a path toward sound fiscal footing. Fortunately for the American people, we are keeping our campaign pledges, and this budget does reflect their confidence in the new leadership of the Congress.

This budget leaves our country with a surplus after 10 years. It puts us on a path to begin to pay down our national debt, and it does not raise taxes.

By balancing the budget without tax hikes, like we do in Texas with our budget, we can protect taxpayers and foster an economic environment that allows jobs and opportunity to blossom.

But protecting our taxpayers is not our only priority. I believe our No. 1 priority in the Federal Government is national security. I believe Congress needs to make sure that is unmistakably clear, and we do so in this budget.

The budget also provides the military with the necessary flexibility to react to changing threats and to make additional investments as necessary in a way that does not add to overspending.

Not only does this send a message to our troops that they will have the sup-

port they need in order to do the job they volunteered to do but also to our families, our military families who serve as well in our all-volunteer military system.

This prioritization of national security also sends a very important message to our Nation's adversaries. We know that weakness is a provocation to the bullies and the tyrants around the world. When people such as Vladimir Putin see the United States retreating, pulling back, not prioritizing our national security, and not maintaining our role in the world as a pre-eminent power, it is a provocation and it is an encouragement. We see that happening around the world as we see now a greater security threat environment than perhaps we have seen in many, many years. But this budget sends a message to our adversaries around the world that America will not shrink and will not retreat from our leadership role.

The budget under consideration was passed just a few days ago in the House of Representatives because it serves the American people by providing for our national defense and balancing the budget within 10 years. And it doesn't raise taxes—something Congress hasn't done for almost 15 years.

This afternoon, the Senate will keep its part of the bargain. We will follow through on our promise, and we will make clear to the American people that we are committed to getting our fiscal house in order with this important first step.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, a budget is far more than a series of numbers on a piece of paper. A budget really is a statement of values and priorities, a statement of the kind of Nation we are and the kind of Nation we want to be.

For many of us, these values and priorities are clear. We believe that a budget should help us move toward an economy that is built from the middle out—not from the top down—and a government that works for all of our families—not just the wealthiest few. But the Republican budget that we are here debating today would move us in the opposite direction.

Instead of working with us to build on the bipartisan budget deal we struck last Congress, Republicans have introduced a budget that would lock in sequestration. It would hollow out defense and nondefense investments and use gimmicks and games to paper over the problems.

Instead of putting jobs, wages, and economic security first by prioritizing policies such as paid sick leave, which shouldn't be partisan issues, the Republican budget would cut taxes for the rich and leave working families behind. Instead of building on the work we have done to make health care more affordable and accessible, the Republican budget would take us back to the bad

old days when insurance companies called all the shots and when fewer Americans had access to the care they need.

I will take a few minutes today to talk about each of these issues and to urge my Republican friends to take a different approach, to put politics aside, to come back to the table, and to work with us on a responsible budget that puts the middle class first and will actually work for families and communities that we all represent.

The first issue I want to talk about is the automatic cuts from sequestration and the failure of this budget to address an issue Democrats and Republicans agree needs to be solved.

I am proud that coming out of the terrible government shutdown at the end of 2013, we were finally able to break through the gridlock and dysfunction to reach a bipartisan budget deal that prevented another government shutdown, restored investments in education, in research, and in defense jobs and really laid down a foundation for continued bipartisan work.

That deal wasn't the budget I would have written on my own, and it wasn't the one Republicans would have written on their own, but it did end the lurching from crisis to crisis. It helped workers and our economy and made it clear that there is bipartisan support for rolling back sequestration in a balanced way.

Our bipartisan deal was a strong step in the right direction, and I was hopeful that we could work together to build on it, because we know there is bipartisan support to replace sequestration in a balanced and fair way.

Not only did we prove that with our bipartisan budget deal, but Democrats and Republicans across the country have continued to come out against the senseless cuts to defense and non-defense investments. But Republicans went the opposite way with their budget this year.

They were able to cut trillions of dollars of programs that support families and fight poverty—nearly \$1 trillion cut from Medicare and Medicaid and more than \$5 trillion overall. But they refused to dedicate a single penny of that to roll back the automatic cuts to education, research or defense investments.

To put that in perspective, we were able to roll back sequestration for 2 years in the Bipartisan Budget Act with \$85 billion in savings. But the Republican budget won't fix the problem even for this coming year with more than 50 times that amount of savings.

Instead of using just a tiny fraction of the enormous cuts this budget has in it to pay for investments that both Republicans and Democrats agree must be made, this budget uses a gimmick by increasing OCO funding to appear to patch over the problem on the defense side without raising the cap on defense funding and doing nothing at all for nondefense investments such as education, research, jobs, and infrastructure.

We know the automatic cuts are terrible policy, and we know the President has said he would veto spending bills at sequester levels. I also know there are Republicans who have seen the impact of sequestration in their States, as I have seen it in my State of Washington, and I know there are Republicans who look at this budget and wonder why it couldn't use some of the trillions of dollars in cuts to reinvest in American innovation or in our defense investments.

So I am hopeful that instead of continuing to kick the can down the road or relying on gimmicks that don't actually solve this problem, Republicans will come back to the table and work with us to build on our bipartisan budget deal in a balanced and responsible way, will allow the Appropriations subcommittees to actually do their work and not wait for another crisis before they push the tea party aside and work with us to get this done.

Instead of rehashing old debates and lurching us toward another completely avoidable crisis, we should be working together to put in place policies that boost the economy and help our working families—policies such as allowing workers to earn paid sick days. No worker should have to sacrifice a day's pay or their job altogether just to take care of themselves or their sick child. But today, in this country, 43 million Americans do not have access to paid sick days.

Making sure more workers have this basic worker protection will give more families some much-needed economic stability. And, by the way, it is pro-business. Access to paid sick days boosts productivity, and it reduces turnover—two huge benefits for employers.

Businesses that want to help their workers stay healthy should have a level playing field so they aren't at a disadvantage when they do the right thing. A strong bipartisan majority of Senators affirmed their support for allowing workers to earn paid sick days during the budget amendment process, and I was hopeful we could build on that momentum and keep working together to increase the economic security for millions of workers and families.

So I was very disappointed that the conference report does not reflect that provision. Instead of keeping our bipartisan amendment and providing paid sick days to help workers and families, this conference report instead allows for tax credits for employers that would not guarantee access to paid leave. That is a step in the wrong direction. But it doesn't have to be the last step this Congress takes.

So I urge our colleagues to work with me to pass the Healthy Families Act, legislation that would move this debate beyond budget amendments and make paid sick days a reality for millions of Americans. Allowing workers to earn paid sick days is one way we

can ensure our workplaces are working for all families—not just the wealthiest few.

I also want to talk about one more way this budget would be devastating for families across the country. The Affordable Care Act was a critical step forward in our efforts to build a health care system that puts patients first, and it allows every family to get the affordable, high quality health care they need. But the work didn't end when this law passed—far from it.

Families across the country are expecting us to keep working to build on this progress and continue making health care more affordable, more accessible, and with higher quality, and that is what Democrats are focused on. Unfortunately, this Republican budget would do the exact opposite. It would roll back all the progress we have made, take us back to the bad old days when insurance companies called all the shots, when being a woman was a preexisting condition, when far fewer families could afford to get the health care they need. In fact, this Republican approach could even mean an average tax hike of \$3,200 a year on working families who would have to pay more for their care.

Families are tired of Republicans playing games with their health care. So I hope my Republican colleagues will listen to the millions of people across the country who have more affordable, quality health care and to the vast majority of our constituents, who want us to work together to solve problems and not rehash old fights, and that they will finally drop the political games and work with us to move our health care system forward—not backward—for the communities we serve.

Republicans control Congress. It is their job to write and pass a budget. But our constituents actually sent us here to work together—not simply to argue with each other. People across the country are expecting us to break through the gridlock once again, like we were able to do last Congress, and deliver results for their families and the communities we represent.

So I urge my colleagues to oppose this budget that would be devastating to middle-class families, seniors, investments in our future, and the economy. I really hope that Republicans decide to come back to the table and work with us on policies that grow the economy from the middle out—not from the top down—and that moves us towards a government that works for all families—not just the wealthiest few.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator ENZI and members of the Budget Committee for the 2016 budget conference agreement that we are currently considering in the Senate. Included in the budget conference agreement are policy provisions that I believe begin to move this country in the

right fiscal direction, including balancing the budget within 10 years without the need to raise taxes on the hard-working American taxpayer—something the administration's budget fails to do. In addition, the budget agreement provides a pathway to repeal the failed policies of ObamaCare.

I am pleased the resolution does provide some relief from sequestration's devastating cuts to our national defense. The good news is that there is some relief. Providing additional resources for defense through the Overseas Contingency Operations account, known as OCO, is a good one, but it is temporary and it is a Band-Aid.

Again, I thank Senator ENZI for the great job he has done, but the fact is that this body and this Congress is guilty—is guilty—of not repealing sequestration, which is devastating our military and destroying our ability to defend this Nation in these most perilous and difficult times.

Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on January 29, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger testified:

As we look around the world, we encounter upheaval and conflict. The United States has not faced a more diverse and complex array of crises since the end of the Second World War.

What are we doing? We are slashing defense year after year through something called sequestration, which was never intended to happen. That is a devastating indictment of the Congress of the United States in our first priority, which is protecting this nation.

Gen. Mark Welsh, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, stated:

We are now the smallest Air Force we've ever been. When we deployed to Operation Desert Storm in 1990, the Air Force had 188 fighter squadrons. Today, we have 54, and we're headed to 49 in the next couple of years. In 1990, there were 511,000 active duty airmen alone. Today, we have 200,000 fewer. . . . We currently have 12 fleets of airplanes that qualify for antique license plates in the state of Virginia.

General Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army, said:

In the last three years, the Army's active component and strength has been reduced by 80,000; the reserve component by 18,000. We have 13 less active component brigade combat teams. We've eliminated three active aviation brigades. . . . We have already slashed investments in modernization by 25 percent.

He went on to say:

The number one thing that keeps me up at night is that if we're asked to respond to an unknown contingency, I will send soldiers to that contingency not properly trained and ready. We simply are not used to doing that.

Admiral Greenert, the Chief Of Naval Operations:

[D]ue to sequestration of 2013, our contingency response force, that's what's on call from the United States, is one-third of what it should be and what it needs to be.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, Commandant of the Marine Corps, now nominated to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Of Staff, testified:

We're investing in modernization at a historically low level. We know that we must maintain at least 10 percent to 12 percent of our resources on modernization to field a ready force for tomorrow. To pay today's bills, we're currently investing 7 percent to 8 percent.

I asked every single one of our service chiefs and our area commanders the same question: If we do not repeal sequestration, will it put the lives of our men and women who are serving in the military in greater danger? The answer by every single one of these uniformed leaders—not just civilian leaders—was, yes, we will put the lives of the men and women who are serving in the military in greater danger unless we repeal sequestration on defense.

I say to my colleagues of the United States Senate, this is not acceptable. It is not acceptable for us to ask the young men and women who are serving in our military in uniform to put their lives in greater danger because we copped out, we failed to address the issue of increasing an unsustainable deficit. We are making them pay the price.

Thirteen percent of the budget is allocated to defense; defense is taking 50 percent of the cuts.

The Ryan-Murray agreement was something that was welcomed. We need another Ryan-Murray. We need the men and women who are serving as Members of Congress to understand that we have no greater responsibility than the defense of this Nation.

I can assure my colleagues that, working with my friend Senator REED of Rhode Island, the ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, we will be working. We will reduce waste and mismanagement. We will address acquisition. We will reform acquisition and the terrible cost overruns that plague our ability to do business in the defense business. We will be cutting the size of these huge staffs that have grown and grown. We will be making significant reforms in the way the military does business, but these reforms will not have the impact that is necessary in the short term, and that is that we are putting the lives of American soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen in greater danger.

I come to the floor to thank my colleague from Wyoming, Senator ENZI, for the great job he has done on this budget. But I would tell my colleagues that we must work together in a bipartisan fashion to fix the damage sequestration is doing.

I will only add one other point that is very important. Some of us have forgotten that in the days after the Vietnam war, the military was in terrible disarray. Ronald Reagan came to the Presidency on the slogan "Peace through strength." We rebuilt the military. We put it back in the condition of being the greatest military and effective force in the world, and we won the Cold War.

Right now, if you look at a map of the world in 2011 and look at a map of the world today—in 2011 when we en-

acted sequestration—you will find that Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, Madeleine Albright, Brent Scowcroft, and every person who is respected on national security in this country will tell you that we are in grave danger. Whether it be from ISIS, whether it be from Iran, whether it be aggressive behavior by the Chinese—no matter what it is, there are severe crises, no matter where it is in the world. We are in the midst of serious challenges to our national security, and the last place—the last place—we should continue to cut is on our defense and capability to defend this nation.

I yield floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I first wish to thank the distinguished Senator from Arizona for his leadership and echo his words that we need a bipartisan solution on this issue, and hopefully we will be able to address it, not only supporting our men and women when they are actively in harm's way but supporting them as veterans, which I know he cares deeply about as well. That is why we need a bipartisan and balanced solution like we had before. I thank the Senator for his leadership.

Mr. President, the reality is that this budget—any budget for the United States—is about our values and our priorities. That is what it is all about as a country. I have to say, as a senior member of the Budget Committee, I am deeply concerned about the values portrayed in this budget. I greatly respect the chairman and ranking member and thank them for their service, but when we look at this budget in total, this goes opposite to what the majority of Members talk about every day because this particular budget keeps the system rigged in favor of the wealthy and well-connected against the interests of hard-working, middle-class Americans.

Picture this: In this budget, if you are a family with assets of \$10 million or more, you hit the jackpot: You get at least a \$3 million bonus tax cut in this bill, in terms of the policies laid out in the bill. How is it paid for? It is paid for by everybody else. Sixteen million hard-working Americans will see a tax increase of at least \$900 based on these policies. We will see critical investments and services cut. There is nothing done to address jobs going overseas. There is not one loophole proposed to be closed that is sending our jobs overseas. We want to create an economy and really balance the budget? Let's bring those jobs home. There is nothing in this budget about that. If you have wealth of over \$10 million, it is your lucky day—\$3 million or more in your pocket. There is Christmas in this budget for very wealthy multimillionaires, but if you are everybody else, you are in trouble.

There is no focus on creating jobs. And God help you if your family has a mom or dad or grandpa or grandma

who has Alzheimer's disease and is in a nursing home because this budget guts nursing home care for millions of Americans, a lot of folks who desperately need that care.

One out of five Medicare dollars today goes to treat Alzheimer's. This is an area I have been deeply involved in and I am partnering with Senator SUSAN COLLINS on, important work that needs to be done. But if you have someone who has Alzheimer's disease and who needs long-term care, you are out of luck in this budget.

This morning, I talked to a group of women who are in town for breast cancer research. This is the month that focuses on breast cancer research. If you care about breast cancer research, in this budget, you are out of luck. If you want to make sure we are investing in cures and treatments—we are now so close in so many areas. American research, innovation, and the best minds in the world are working on opportunities to us to solve Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease and cancers and all kinds of other areas of concern. But the budget is cut for NIH, the National Institutes of Health. What kinds of priorities does this reflect?

On top of that, for 16.4 million people who now have affordable insurance, it will be gone.

What is interesting about the budget is it is very creative because all the revenue, all the fees to pay for health care stay to help balance the budget; it is the health care that goes away. So for those breast cancer patients whom I talked to this morning who are now so grateful that if they need to go out and get new insurance, they will not be called someone with a pre-existing condition, that goes away in this budget.

If you have a child who is 22, 23, just graduated—I spoke at graduation ceremonies this last weekend—and they are on your insurance right now while they are trying to get themselves together and get that first job, that goes away.

This budget attacks health care, which, by the way, is not a frill. We do not control when and how we get sick or if our children get sick or if our parents or grandparents need a nursing home or what may happen in terms of medical issues in our families, but health care is directly attacked. The Affordable Care Act—gone. Gutting inpatient care in nursing homes for Alzheimer's patients and others. Research—gone.

We are hearing from our Republican friends that they are making government work. But I will tell you what—it is not working for middle-class families. It is working for you if you are making over \$10 million a year or have more than \$10 million in assets, but it is not working for you if you are holding down two or three jobs and you are just trying to make it for your family.

We believe as Democrats that this ought to be a middle-class budget because everybody deserves a fair shot to get ahead and have a chance to have a better future. For us, that means this

budget should have a major focus on creating millions of jobs by rebuilding our roads, rebuilding our bridges, our infrastructure.

By the way, the funding for that—the authorization for the highway trust fund—runs out at the end of May. There is nothing in here to address that, no funding in here to address that. We are going to see all kinds of jobs eliminated all across the country if that funding is eliminated. We believe in rebuilding our roads and bridges and creating millions of jobs.

We stand up for Social Security and Medicare. This budget has \$430 billion in cuts to Medicare, and it doesn't say where they come from. It is proposing a structure that would actually eliminate Medicare as we know it and turn it into some kind of a voucher system or some other kind of system that is not guaranteed care under Medicare. We believe in protecting Medicare and Social Security.

We believe everybody ought to have a fair chance to work hard and make it and go to college. This does nothing but increase costs for students going to college. We believe costs ought to go down so that when students leave college, they do not end up with so much debt that they cannot go out and buy a house. People cannot buy a house, as realtors in Michigan have told me, because they have so much debt. They cannot qualify to get a loan for a house or to start a new business.

We, as Democrats, want to make sure everybody has a chance to go to college, that it is affordable, that we are protecting Social Security and Medicare, and that we are creating jobs, rebuilding our roads and our highways and the opportunity to invest in America.

Finally, we want to bring jobs home. It is insane that we still have a Tax Code that rewards those—sometimes only on paper—who leave this country. They still breathe the air, drink the water, drive on the roads, they just don't have to pay their fair share of taxes as businesses because on paper they are based somewhere else. That is not fair to every small business in Michigan that is working hard every day. It is not fair to every taxpayer across this country and every business we have that is really an American business. There is nothing in this budget which addresses that.

I conclude by saying we should resoundingly object and vote no on the priorities and the values set out in this budget. They do not reflect what is good to create and grow a middle class and create opportunity in this country.

If you are one of the privileged few, hallelujah. Break out the champagne after this passes. But if you are the majority of Americans, hold on to your seats and put on your seatbelt, because if this is, in fact, put into place, it will be a rough ride for America. Our side is going to do everything humanly possible to make sure that does not happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my great colleague from Michigan for her outstanding words and leadership. She is a senior member of the Budget Committee. She knows just what is wrong with this budget and she knows how to reach the American people in terms of revealing and showing just that. I thank her.

I thank my dear friend Senator SANDERS, a fellow graduate of James Madison High School in Brooklyn, for his great leadership on the Budget Committee as well.

Look, in a certain sense, this Republican budget is a gift to us and to the American people because it shows their real priorities, and their priorities are so far away from what average Americans want that this budget will rebound from one end of the country to the other between now and November of 2016.

The budget the House and Senate Republicans have put together helps the very wealthy and powerful in our country who, frankly, don't need any help. This idea that cutting taxes on the very wealthy will somehow make America a better place, how many Americans actually believe that? We understand a lot of our colleagues do. They hang out with these people, I guess. But that is not what most Americans think, that is for sure.

The budget should reflect the economic reality right now. Middle-class incomes are declining. It is harder to stay in the middle class. It is harder to reach the middle class. A budget should help those folks who are in the middle class stay there, and it should help those who are trying to get to the middle class create ladders so they can get there.

Again, this budget seems to focus all of its attention and all of its goodies on the very wealthy. The economy is getting stronger but mainly at the very high end. So we need to cut their taxes because they are hurting? And at the same time we need to raise taxes on 16 million Americans who are working and making \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000 a year—raise their taxes by \$900? How many Americans would say we should cut taxes on the 4,000 wealthiest people an average of \$3 million, at the cost of \$260 billion over 10 years, and raise taxes by \$900 on people making \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000 a year? Is it 1 percent of America who thinks that way? Maybe. But it seems our colleagues on the other side of the aisle followed that Pied Piper, that 1 percent, in putting together their budget. It makes no sense.

The Republican budget is a document of willful ignorance. It was constructed in an ideological house of mirrors where no one sees reality. No one who put together this budget sees any reality. They don't see middle-class people struggling.

Making it harder to pay for college? What the heck is going on here in this

great America? Our colleagues are trying to pass a budget that says we should make it harder to pay for college, that veterans should lose food stamps—veterans, the people who served us. I am sure the vast majority of them are looking for jobs and income. That is who veterans are. They don't want a handout. But when they are down on their luck—maybe they had injuries, maybe it was rough adjusting to family life back home again—you cut their food stamps? Wow. What kind of budget is this? As I said, it is a budget in an ideological house of mirrors.

Cap student loan payments? There are 30- and 40-year-olds with huge burdens of debt. They cannot even buy a home. Maybe they even put off having kids. In this budget, our Republican friends are saying we should eliminate and cut programs so we can reduce some of that debt burden. Wow. What world are you folks living in? It sure isn't the world of reality. It is an ideological house of mirrors. It is a budget document of willful ignorance.

I could go on and on and on with this budget. How many families have elderly parents in nursing homes who have Alzheimer's? We know that tragedy. This budget makes it harder for those people to stay in those nursing homes by cutting Medicaid, which many of them are on. And then these young families are going to have the burden of taking their dear parents, their loved ones, back into their homes. Do we want that?

Well, you say, we have to cut somewhere. How about not giving the 4,000 richest families \$260 billion over 10 years and putting some of the money into cancer research, putting some of the money into helping veterans feed themselves, putting some of the money into helping make it easier to pay for college?

Republicans are going to have to figure out a way to convince the American people that they are doing something, anything, to help the middle class. So far they are striking out.

There is only one bit of good news. Our colleagues, when they are forced to actually put real numbers to these budget numbers in the appropriations process, will not be able to do it. They will not dare do it. I hope—this will be up to our ranking member Senator MIKULSKI and the members of our Appropriations Committee—they take this budget and actually craft it into the appropriations bill and put it out there, and let's see how many of our colleagues actually vote for it.

How many of our colleagues will vote to make it harder to pay for college? How many of our colleagues will make it harder for veterans to feed themselves when they are out of luck? How many of our colleagues will vote to raise taxes by \$900 on people making \$30,000, \$40,000 a year? I doubt many.

This is a fun day for our Republican colleagues. They get to beat their ideological breasts, show the hard right

they really mean it, and then maybe we can go back to governing the country and helping the middle class.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I wish to speak as well about the budget that is before the Senate. I want to point out something I believe the Senator from New York failed to mention in his comments. We are actually doing a budget. That is what is pretty historic about this.

A few years back, I got on the Budget Committee because I thought it would be the place where a lot of action was going to occur and where we were going to be doing big, consequential things for the country. I asked our leaders, when they made committee assignments, if I could serve on the Budget Committee. I served on the Budget Committee for 4 years. In the 4 years I was on the Budget Committee, when the Democrats controlled this Chamber, we did not write a budget—not a single year. It was like being on a committee that was completely irrelevant around here. We did not do a budget for 4 years. This year, we are finally going to pass a budget. They only did do one in 2009 so they could pass ObamaCare with 51 votes.

The last time we actually had a 10-year balanced budget was in 2001. So we are talking about something that is pretty historic. This is the first time this has happened in 14 years. I will repeat that. The last time Congress passed a joint 10-year balanced budget resolution was 14 years ago, in 2001—the year Apple released the first iPod.

This year, the President has, once again, proposed a budget that never balances—not in 10 years, not in 25 years, not ever. When the other side gets up and talks about the Republican budget and attacks it, at least Republicans in this Chamber recognize the importance of having a budget and putting in place a pathway, if you will, for how we are going to get the fiscal situation of this country in a better place, and it sets out our priorities because that is really what the budget process does. It says this is what we are for.

What the Democrats argue—and we heard the Senator from New York making the argument—is that we are not spending enough and that this is about spending more. I believe the American people realize that if we want to solve middle-class wage stagnation—they talk about the middle-class wages being lower, and they are lower. They have been significantly lower since this President took office. As I was saying, if we want to solve middle-class wage stagnation, we have to have an expanding economy.

The way to help people into a better place economically and to raise the income of people in this country is to get a growing, vibrant, robust, expanding economy that is growing at a faster rate than the anemic 1- to 2-percent growth we have seen in the last few

years. The way we achieve that is not by growing the government. It is not about growing the government. We have to grow the economy. When the economy is growing, that is when we start to see people in this country, middle-class income families, benefit.

As I said, the President proposed a budget that never balanced, and he proposed increasing spending by a staggering 65 percent over the next 10 years. I don't need to tell the American people that kind of spending is unsustainable. For too long the attitude in Washington has been to spend now, pay later. That only works for so long. Sooner or later your spending catches up with you.

Six years ago, when the President took office, our national debt was already a massive \$10.6 trillion. Over the past 6 years, during the President's administration, our national debt has increased by more than \$7.5 trillion, and today it is at a dangerously high \$18.2 trillion. That is the size of our economy. In fact, that is larger than our economy. That is a 1-to-1 ratio. That kind of debt slows economic growth, threatens government programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, and jeopardizes our Nation's future.

In 2011, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM Mike Mullen, the highest ranking military official in our country, said, "I've said many times that I believe the single, biggest threat to our national security is our debt." I have heard him say that. I served on the Armed Services Committee for 6 years. I heard the chairman of the Joint Chiefs say that repeatedly in front of committees at various hearings and at various times. That is quite a statement from the country's top-ranking military official: the greatest threat to our national security is our debt.

If we keep racking up our debt the way we have been doing, we will not be able to pay for our priorities, such as Social Security, Medicare, national defense, and infrastructure. All of those priorities could face huge cuts if we don't get our Nation on a sound fiscal footing.

When the Republicans took control of the Senate in January, we were determined to get Washington working again. We knew that one of the most important steps in that process was passing a balanced budget resolution. Republicans understand what every American family knows; that you cannot keep racking up debt indefinitely and that the solution to being in debt is not to increase spending.

In March, we introduced a budget blueprint that would balance the budget in 10 years and put our Nation on a path to fiscal health. House Republicans introduced a similar balanced budget resolution. During the month of April, the two Houses came together to iron out the differences in our blueprints and produced the final document that we will be voting on today.

It is not a perfect document. It does not solve every one of our Nation's

problems, but at long last it gets us moving in a different direction—in the right direction. Instead of ignoring our Nation's fiscal problems, the Republicans' budget resolution addresses them and promotes spending restraint.

Under our budget blueprint, by the time the 10-year budget closes in 2025, our Nation will be running a surplus of \$24 billion instead of racking up another \$1.5 trillion in deficits every single year. Unlike some budget plans, our budget will continue to balance in 2026 and beyond.

In addition to restraining spending, the Republicans' budget resolution focuses on cutting waste and eliminating the inefficiency and redundancy that plagues so many government programs. Our budget also puts in place reforms that will encourage honest accounting. The result of these provisions will be a more efficient, effective, and accountable government that works for the American people.

Our budget also, as I said, makes a healthy economy a priority. Almost 6 years after the recession has ended, millions of Americans are still struggling and opportunities for advancement are still few and far between. A big reason for that is the oppressive, big-government policies and deficit spending of the Obama administration. Our budget will help stop government from strangling the economy by limiting the growth of spending and reducing the debt, which will help reduce the cost of work and investment and the cost of starting and growing a business. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that our budget will result in an additional \$400 billion in economic growth over the next 10 years.

The Republicans' budget will also pave the way for the removal of inefficient and ineffective government regulations that are making it difficult for many businesses to hire new workers and create new opportunities and higher paying jobs.

Our budget also addresses another priority of American families, and that is fixing our Nation's broken health care system. Now 5 years on, the President's health care law has resulted in higher costs, lost health care plans, reduced access to doctors, and new burdens on businesses, both large and small. In fact, it has been pretty much one disaster after another.

Just this week, a USA TODAY headline announced that "contrary to goals, ER visits rise under ObamaCare." The article says: "Three-quarters of emergency physicians say they've seen ER patient visits surge since ObamaCare took effect—just the opposite of what many Americans expected would happen." That is from the USA TODAY article. Of course, as we know, ER visits are our most expensive form of health care.

It is no surprise that the majority of the American people continue to oppose the law. Our budget paves the way for a repeal of ObamaCare and the introduction of real, patient-centered

health care reforms that will give Americans more health care choices at a lower cost.

Finally, our budget will start the process of putting major entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare on a sounder footing going forward. Right now, the Social Security trust fund is headed toward bankruptcy. If we don't take action, Social Security recipients could be facing a 25-percent cut in benefits by the year 2033. Medicare faces similar challenges to those faced by Social Security. Under the worst-case scenario, the Medicare trust fund could become insolvent by as early as 2021. That is just 6 short years away. The Republican budget would help preserve Medicare by extending the trust fund's solvency for an additional 5 years, which would protect retirees' benefits while giving policymakers additional time to ensure that this program provides support to seniors for decades to come.

I am proud that today the Republicans in Congress will ensure that we have a joint balanced budget resolution for the first time in 14 years, but I also wish to emphasize that is no more than what the American people should expect. The American people, after all, have to live within a budget; their government needs to do so as well.

Going forward, balanced budgets need to be the norm here in Congress. Washington has spent enough time working for its own interests. It is time to get Washington working again for American families.

This is the first time in 14 years that we have actually had a budget resolution and a conference report that balance within 10 years. As I said earlier, during my time here in the Senate, which hasn't been that long but about 10 years now, this is the first time—with the exception of 2009, in which we did a budget simply so the Democrats could pass ObamaCare through reconciliation—this is the first time we have done a budget that passed both chambers in the 10 years I have been here, with the exception perhaps of the first few years.

It is time to get Washington working again for the American people. It starts with passing the budget. That is why I am proud that Senator ENZI and others worked hard to get us where we are. I hope today we will ultimately have the votes necessary to pass this and do something which hasn't been done around here in a very long time but which is really essential for the good of the American people in this country.

RECESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. today for the weekly conference meetings and that the time during the recess count against the majority time on the budget conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:51 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that time under any quorum call be equally divided between the two sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise today to speak in opposition to the Republican so-called budget. I call it a "so-called budget" because I do not believe even Republicans would actually pass appropriations consistent with it. It looks to me like it is just a show to keep extremists on the right happy. My guess is that practical Republicans cannot wait for President Obama to bail them out by negotiating appropriations higher.

Recently, we have seen impressive examples of committee bipartisanship. In Foreign Relations, Senator CORKER brought a unanimously bipartisan Iran resolution out of the poisonous turmoil surrounding that issue. In the HELP Committee, Senator ALEXANDER brought a unanimously bipartisan education bill out of committee on an issue that has long been contested. Even the intensely divided Environment and Public Works Committee brought out a chemical regulation bill with a strong bipartisan majority. But Budget? No chance.

Instead of working with Democrats on a real budget, Republicans produced a partisan ideological showcase. They cut programs for seniors, for low-income families, and for other vulnerable citizens and protected the wealthiest Americans from contributing even one dime in deficit reduction.

As we have seen in the past, Republicans care about deficit reduction only when it involves cutting programs for people who need help. But can they find a single tax loophole to cut? Not one.

This budget follows the Ryan budget off the cliff of shielding every single

subsidy and giveaway in the Tax Code. No special interest tax loophole is too grotesque for them. Big Oil tax subsidies, special low rates for hedge fund managers, private jet depreciation, for goodness' sake—tax giveaways that amount to nothing more than taxpayer subsidies for the wealthy and well connected—this budget loves and protects them all.

Not only do the Republicans protect every tax loophole, they propose eliminating the estate tax—a tax that only affects families worth over \$10 million—the top 0.2 percent. You may have heard a lot about the 1 percent. Well, this budget does even better than that. It confers a great, wonderful, fat favor on the top 0.2 percent and, at the same time, the budget will allow the taxes to increase on 13 million lower- and middle-income households—households with 25 million children. That is a \$300 billion tax giveaway to that 0.2 percent—to basically 5,000-some of the wealthiest families in America. And that big gift to those 5,000-and-some wealthiest families is paired with a tax hike for millions of families who are just getting by.

And, of course, it is lower-income and middle-class families who would suffer the most from the Republican spending cuts. Medicaid, food stamps, Pell grants, and job training all get axed. They hand Medicare over to private sector vouchers and kick 16 million Americans off of health insurance plans they obtained through the Affordable Care Act.

Today, across this Capitol, breast cancer advocates are asking for our support for investment to help cure that deadly disease. This budget cuts research for breast cancer and other deadly diseases. It slashes funding for nursing homes, including those that care for seniors with Alzheimer's. It even supports a 20-percent across-the-board benefit cut for disabled Americans—a 20-percent benefit cut for disabled Americans—by doubling down on the senseless House rule that can be used to create an artificial crisis and prevent a routine Social Security fix.

As for the investments that keep our Nation competitive in an increasingly global economy, all are attacked. From scientific research to education to infrastructure, the Republicans offer a radical plan of cuts.

In a nutshell, their behavior proves that the deficit is just a pretext for them to cut programs that Republicans have always opposed—programs that create jobs, support the middle class, and offer lifelines to the most vulnerable Americans.

Even transportation infrastructure—our roads and bridges—gets whacked. Much of our highway system dates back to the 1950s, and roads and bridges across the country are in dire need of repair and replacement. This budget fails to provide any new funding for infrastructure. It does not even ensure that current funding levels will be maintained.